



- We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance in the event anything may happen to cause you to be unable to travel, or while traveling. Most health insurance policies do not cover you while you are traveling to destinations outside the United States. Make sure you carry your policy and cards with you during your vacation.
- Make sure your passport is signed and the emergency information is filled in, as well as any necessary visas for your upcoming trip.
- Leave a copy of your passport (photo page with all of the pertinent information) and itinerary with family/friends, as well as carrying a copy with you, so that in the event the original is misplaced or stolen, you have the copy available when you visit the consulate.
- Be cautious while traveling; treat it as if you're in any big city in the United States and don't wear conspicuous clothing or jewelry that makes you stand out in the crowd. Don't carry excessive amounts of cash, and be sure not to leave your luggage unattended at any time. Pickpockets make their living by preying on unsuspecting tourists, so just be cautious.
- Make sure you have all of the prescriptions you need to have filled prior to traveling, and bring your medications and any valuables with you in your carry-on bag.
- Make sure that any liquids you need in your carry on are three ounces or less, and that the containers are in a small Ziploc[®] bag.
- You can go to <http://travel.state.gov> to check on country specific information for any travel warnings to various countries.
- Check on the CDC's web site for guidance on vaccinations and general health precautions. It is on the Traveler's Health page at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>.
- Be sure to check with your travel agent at Triple R Travel if you have special needs while traveling. Many places in Europe are not accessible for wheelchairs and/or scooters, and so it is good to know of special accommodations when planning your trip.
- It is good to apply for and obtain your passport as soon as you are considering taking a trip abroad. For passport requirements, please visit the U.S. passport web site at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_2223.html. Most countries require that your passport be valid for at least six months beyond your dates of travel. Visit <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm> for embassy and consulate information.

- Don't bring anything with you that you would hate to lose. This would include valuable jewelry, your social security card, and items in your wallet that are just not necessary while traveling abroad.
- Make sure that you have at least two credit cards available in the event that one is lost or misplaced while you are traveling. Also, be sure to contact the credit card company prior to traveling so they are aware that you will be using the cards while visiting various countries/cities.
- Most airlines allow one checked bag free of charge, with a fee for additional bags and/or if your first checked bag is overweight. Check with your specific airline(s) to find out their requirements and guidelines prior to packing.
- Some folks feel best if they wear a money belt to hold credit cards and cash.
- If you will be on an extended vacation, you may want to pack enough for a week to ten days, and then plan to do laundry during the trip. Many hotels and cruise ships will have laundry service available, and some even have self-service laundry facilities.
- Stay healthy while traveling. Make sure you wash your hands with warm soap and water when possible, as using hand sanitizers is not always the best method of "cleaning" your hands. Stay hydrated by drinking water (recommend bottled water in some areas), especially while on your flights.
- Leave copies of everything in your wallet at home and bring a copy with you. If, for any reason, your wallet is lost or stolen, you will want to have all of the phone numbers handy so that you can cancel all of your credit cards. Also, look at what's in your wallet before you leave on your trip, and leave any cards at home that you don't expect to use abroad.
- If you plan to rent a car abroad, find out the rates and terms for rental car insurance. Your U.S. based car insurance will most likely not cover you in another country. Don't set yourself up for sticker shock at the rental car counter. You may need to shop around.
- Most countries honor a U.S.-issued driver license, but check the specific country where you are travelling to make sure that you don't need any special licenses or permits to drive a car there.
- The drinking water in foreign countries can sometimes make you ill, especially at first before your system can adjust. You may want to avoid tap water and drink bottled water only. This is not always an issue. Ask your doctor and research the quality of drinking water at your destination.
- Ask your doctor if you will need inoculations or vaccines, based on the country(ies) you will be visiting.
- Look up the currency exchange rate for your destination, and be sure to factor this into your budget when planning the cost. Exchange rates can fluctuate, so make your

estimates based on the worst-case scenario. Visit <http://www.x-rates.com> for historical exchange rates.

- Check with your bank to find out if your debit/ATM card is compatible with ATMs at the location you will be staying. Do not assume that your ATM card will work everywhere. U.S.-issued ATM cards usually work at most foreign ATMs. Also, find out what the ATM fees will cost you.
- Exchange as little currency as possible to avoid paying excessive exchange fees. If you are able to withdraw cash in the local currency from an ATM, you are almost always better off this way than exchanging currency, even if the ATM charges a fee. Try to withdraw only as much foreign cash as you need, and exchange your leftover cash when you return to the U.S.
- Be sure to leave extra time at the airport—more than you would leave for a domestic flight—since international flights often have longer lines and additional security screening procedures. For most international flights, you will need to arrive at least 3 hours prior to departure. Check with your airline for specific recommendations. This is even more important when leaving a foreign airport to return to the U.S. Some foreign airports have complex security protocols and require you to pass through multiple checkpoints.
- If you are taking a connecting flight through a foreign airport, find as much specific information as possible about the physical layout of the airport. You may have limited time to move from gate to gate, and some airports may even need to bus you from one building to another. Signage is not always clear, so it's better to have an idea where you need to go to board your next flight.
- Download local maps and information about your destination before you leave, and try to get a good idea of the physical layout of the place where you will be spending most of your time. Do not assume that you will easily be able to find internet access once you get there.
- Bring an electrical converter and adapter if needed. In Europe and a number of countries on other continents, electrical outlets supply power at 240 volts. Most laptop computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices are designed for both 120 volts and 240 volts, but some appliances (such as electric shavers and hot plates) are designed for one input voltage only. Keep in mind that an adapter is designed only to fit the shape of a plug to a different outlet, and does not convert voltage. If you have devices that only work on 120 volts, you will need to buy a converter as well.
- Call your mobile carrier to find out how much you will pay for international roaming charges in your destination country. You might find that you can get a better deal by purchasing a prepaid phone at the airport with a local number. Also, if you have an unlocked phone, you may be able to buy a prepaid SIM card in your destination country. This will allow you to use your regular phone on the local network without incurring any charges with your regular carrier. Prepaid phones abroad are often significantly less

expensive even for calls to the United States, especially since U.S. landline phones typically do not incur charges for inbound calls.

- If you need a cab, avoid hailing a cab on the street. In many countries, cabbies will scam or deliberately overcharge tourists by taking circuitous routes. In some cities, they may even drive you to an alley where people will be waiting to rob you. Have the hotel call you a cab, or if you eat at a restaurant, ask the restaurant to call one. Some cities and countries also have clearly marked cab stands—if you take a cab from one of these, it is generally a much safer bet. In any case, be sure that the cab is clearly marked with an identification number.
- Look up import restrictions for customs and duties. Most countries will require you to pay an import tax if you bring in more than two bottles of liquor, more than one carton of cigarettes, or more than \$10,000 in cash. Also, bear in mind that bringing an unusually large amount of goods may attract suspicion from customs and immigrations officials. Finally, do not bring any kind of tools or anything that is typically used for work. Some countries will detain and question you for several hours if they suspect that you are coming into the country to work without authorization—and they might even deny you entry.
- Don't bring fresh fruits, vegetables or meats with you when you cross an international border. Food items are generally restricted due to health hazards and foreign organisms. Canned and packaged goods are generally acceptable.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding traveling abroad, please contact your travel agent at Triple R Travel for assistance.